

Libraries and Library Organizations

Montana's library system has grown significantly since the state first started to support the system in 1929. Today there are 80 public libraries and 29 branch libraries serving Montana residents, about 500 elementary and high school libraries, and 27 academic libraries in post-secondary institutions. In addition, there are 6 institutional libraries and about 52 special libraries meeting the specialized needs of businesses, hospitals and government agencies.

All of Montana's publicly funded libraries work in partnership with one another and their local communities to form information networks and provide a better return on the citizens' investment. Thanks to advanced technologies, libraries use networks to locate and borrow books and materials, fax and email services to transfer information via telephone lines, and satellites and modems to provide ongoing educational opportunities to rural areas. With improved cooperation among different types of libraries and better access to expanding technologies, Montana libraries are improving access to information locally, regionally and internationally.

The *Montana Library Directory*, an annual directory of all of the libraries in Montana, is compiled by the State Library and is available online on the State Library web site.

Montana Library Directory
<http://montanalibraries.org/Directory/Main/mldHome.asp>

In this chapter, you will find some of the libraries and library support organizations that you will come in contact with as a trustee. Many of these can provide valuable support in helping you to be an effective trustee.

Montana State Library
Commission
[http://msl.mt.gov/about/
commission/commission.asp](http://msl.mt.gov/about/commission/commission.asp)

Montana State Library Commission

The Montana State Library Commission is the governing body for the State Library. It provides assistance and advice for all public libraries in the state, administers federal and state grant funds made available to Montana for library purposes, provides library services for the blind and physically handicapped, and acts as a state board of professional standards and library examiners. Names and contact information of current Commission members are available in the *Montana Library Directory*.

Montana State Librarian

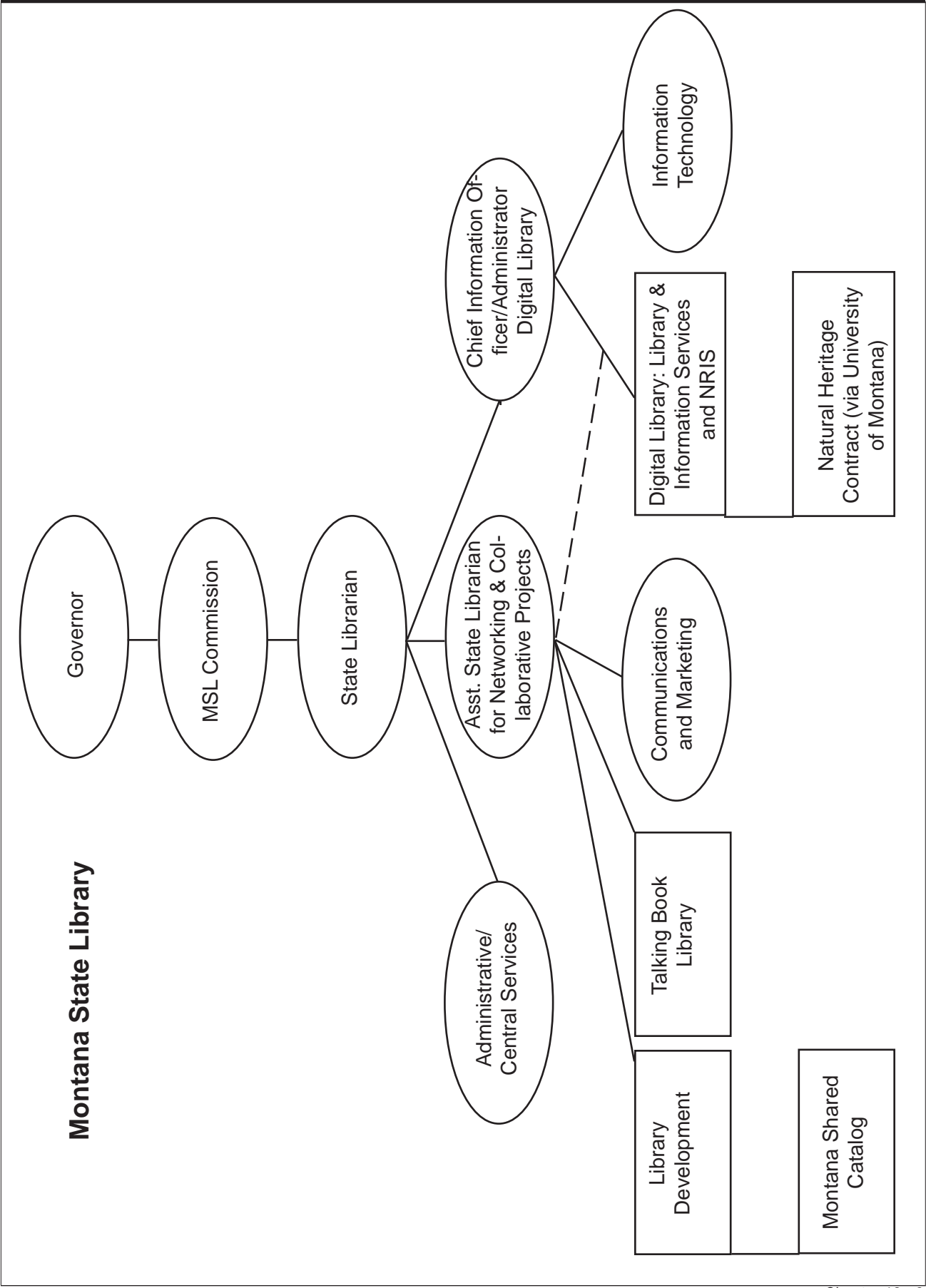
The Montana State Librarian provides leadership and articulates a vision for statewide library services, recognizes divergent library objectives and develops statewide consensus among Montana's libraries. The State Librarian directs the Montana State Library, serves as executive officer of the State Library Commission, conducts strategic long-range planning and evaluation of library services, and is responsible for statewide library development and assistance to libraries. The State Librarian also advises the Governor and the Montana Legislature on the present status of library and information services and on new programs or legislation necessary for effective library service to the people of Montana.

Library Development Division (LDD)

LDD staff provide consulting services to libraries in Montana and assist with the improvement of library services statewide. Information and assistance are provided in technology, development of library consortia, state certification program, library improvement projects, collection management, federal grant and assistance programs, legal issues, Board development, library statistics, federation activities and statewide licensing and purchasing of electronic resources. One major resource, for example, is the statewide online library catalog, the Montana Shared Catalog.

LDD
[http://
montanalibraries.org](http://montanalibraries.org)

LDD also provides training and continuing education opportunities for library staff and trustees across the state.



TBL
[http://msl.mt.gov/
tbl/tbl.asp](http://msl.mt.gov/tbl/tbl.asp)

Montana Talking Book Library (TBL)

TBL provides free library services to Montana citizens who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, or learning disabled. This program is affiliated with the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Services provided to Montana patrons include recorded books and magazines, playback equipment, descriptive videos and Braille books. TBL staff advises and assists individuals, other libraries, nursing homes, schools, and institutions in providing library services to eligible handicapped individuals.

Montana Digital Library (MSdL)

The MSdL includes the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) and the Library Information Services Department (LISD). Much of the information compiled today about Montana's resources and government operations is now electronically produced. The MSdL's mission, therefore, is to collect, arrange, and distribute this electronic information so that it can be easily accessed by citizens, policy-makers and others.

NRIS
<http://nr.is.mt.gov/>

As part of the MSdL, NRIS identifies, acquires, and provides access to information about Montana's natural resources for government agencies, business and industry, and private citizens. NRIS operates a clearinghouse and referral service to link users with the best sources of information and services. NRIS also provides services through the Natural Heritage Program (NHP). NHP scientists collect, manage, and disseminate biodiversity information, emphasizing those plants, animals and natural communities that are rare, declining or have outstanding qualities.

Library Information Services is the principal library for serving work-related needs of state employees. It also provides back-up reference services for Montana libraries and public access to the State Publications Center. State publications, materials on library development and selected federal documents are available from this library to all citizens through interlibrary loan.

To reach any Montana State Library program or department contact:

Montana State Library
PO Box 201800
1515 E. 6th Avenue
Helena MT 59620-1800
1-800-338-5087 (toll free in Montana)
406-444-3115 (main switchboard)
406-444-0266 (fax)

Montana Library Federations

Public libraries in Montana are organized by region into federations, groups of libraries working together to provide a broader range of resources and services than individual libraries alone can offer. These federations were developed by the Montana State Library Commission to give all Montanans access to a public library and, through it, the library resources within their area, the state and the nation. In 1999, the Legislature expanded the law to allow other types of libraries to participate in the federations, including school, academic and special libraries.

Each federation, in accord with its bylaws, selects a Federation Coordinator to coordinate federation meetings, training activities, reports and other tasks. The governing board of the federation is advised by a federation advisory board which is made up of representatives from participating libraries. A majority of these representatives must be public library trustees.

The operation of each federation is specified in an annual Plan of Service that is submitted by federation libraries to the Commission for approval prior to implementation. Services differ among federations, but they can include interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing privileges, newsletters, continuing education and training, consulting visits, reference services and other collaborative activities.

The federation advisory boards assist in planning services available through the federation, but Montana law stipulates that they are advisors only. Each local library board retains control over local aspects of its library's services.

MCA 22-1-404, et. seq
http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca_toc/index.htm

There are six federations in Montana (see map on page 18-7):

Broad Valleys Federation

Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Granite, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Meagher, Park, Powell and Silver Bow counties

Golden Plains Federation

Daniels, Phillips, Roosevelt, Sheridan and Valley counties

Pathfinder Federation

Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier, Hill, Liberty, Pondera, Teton, and Toole counties

Sagebrush Federation

Carter, Custer, Dawson, Garfield, Fallon, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Treasure and Wibaux counties

South Central Federation

Big Horn, Carbon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Musselshell, Petroleum, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties

Tamarack Federation

Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli and Sanders counties

MLA
www.mtlib.org

Montana Library Association (MLA)

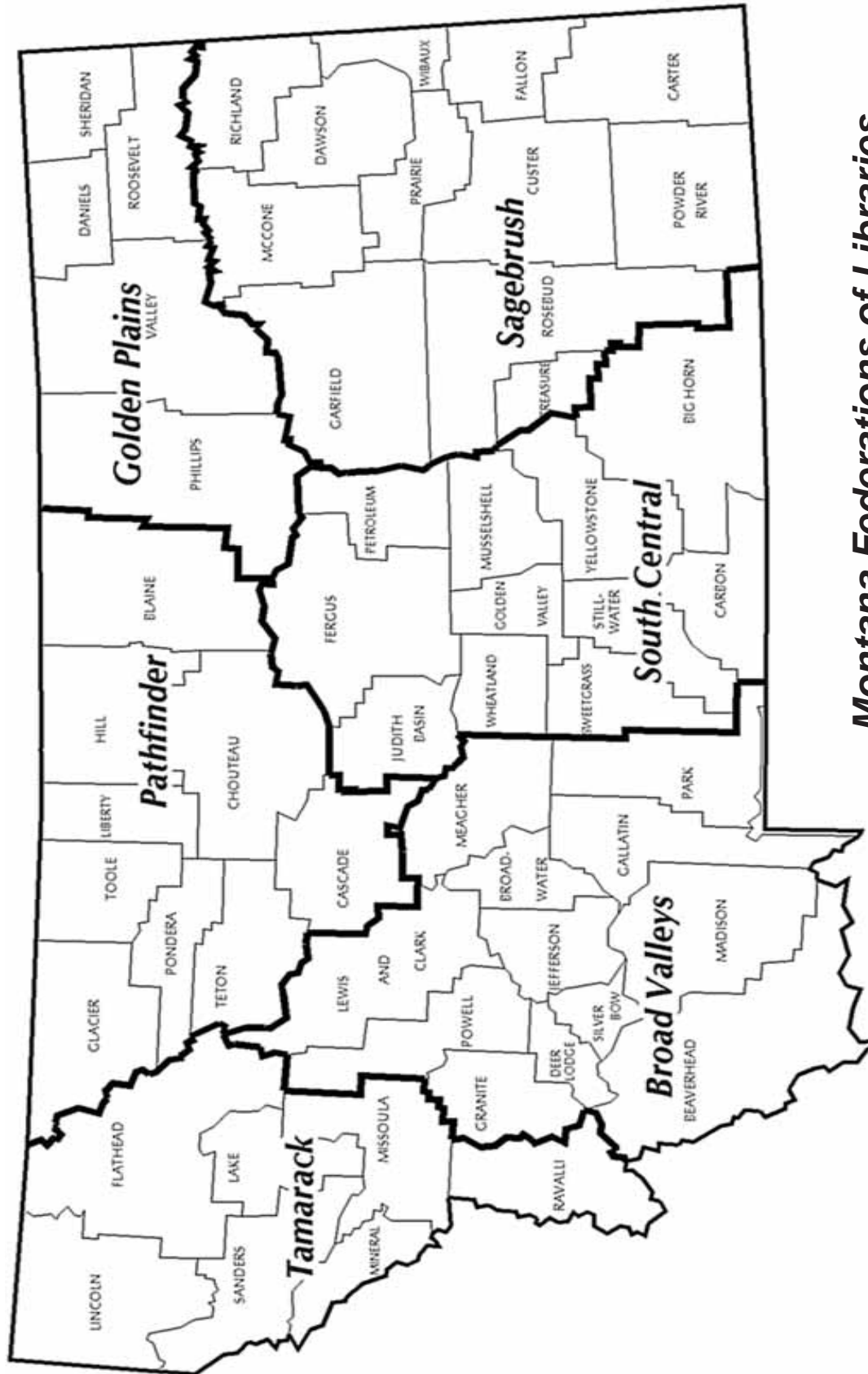
This state association works to promote library interests and development, raise the standards of library services in Montana and provide continuing education for lay people and professional growth opportunities for librarians. Through membership in MLA, trustees get to know library trustees in neighboring counties and from across the state.

MLA represents all types of libraries, public library trustees and members of Friends organizations within its divisions and interest groups. MLA standing committees work on a variety of library-related issues including government affairs, intellectual freedom, marketing and professional development.

Montana Library Focus, the association's newsletter, is issued six times a year and is available online. In addition, MLA hosts an annual conference in the spring as well as division and interest group retreats throughout the year. MLA's electronic mailing list serv, WIRED-MT, is used by Montana librarians and others to discuss ideas and share information relevant to those subscribing to the list serv. It is open to anyone with Internet access and email.

MPLA
www.mpla.us

MPLA is an eleven-state regional association of libraries and Friends. States include Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. The mission of the association is to further the development of librarians, library employees and trustees, and to promote quality library service in the states of the Mountain Plains Region.



Montana Federations of Libraries

MPLA publishes the *MPLA Newsletter* bimonthly and meets annually in joint conference with other library associations. An electronic mailing list, MPLA-L, is maintained by the association to provide a forum for discussion of library topics and issues. The mailing list is open to anyone with Internet access and email.

PNLA
www.pnla.org

Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA)

PNLA is a regional association that promotes regional library activities and cooperation. The association represents libraries in Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, and is designed for people who work in, with and for libraries.

The association publishes *PNLA Quarterly* and holds an annual conference of its members. There is an electronic mailing list, PNLA-L, to provide discussion of library issues and topics of interest in the region. In addition, PNLA sponsors the annual Young Readers' Choice Award, which is the oldest children's choice award in the United States and Canada. Nominations for the YRCA are received from children, teachers, parents, and librarians of the Pacific Northwest region.

ALA
50 East Huron
Chicago, IL 60611
800-545-2433
www.ala.org

American Library Association (ALA)

The oldest library association in the world, ALA is dedicated to improving libraries of all kinds, maintaining professional library standards and protecting freedom of access to information without fear of censorship.

ALA has two divisions of special interest to trustees. The first, the Association of Library Trustees and Advocates (ALTA), conducts national programs on trustee education and publishes items about trusteeship. The second, the Public Library Association (PLA), represents public librarians.

IMLS
www.imls.gov

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

IMLS is the federal agency that administers the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program. LSTA grant funds are awarded to Montana annually to improve library services. (For more information, see Chapter 11-4, Funding the Library.)